



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: FROG

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE FROG?

- It's *tzfardeah*, based on a root from the Aramaic language, צפר, which means "to leap."
- Does anyone know of another animal that's very much like a frog?
- Can anyone teach us the difference between a frog and a toad? (Toads have drier skin, they have warts on their bodies, and most of them live on land.)

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU LIKE ABOUT FROGS?

- I like to hear them croaking at night.
- They eat insects that otherwise would become pests.
- Some people say they're very tasty to eat.

ARE FROGS KOSHER?

- No—because they're included among the "swarming things" that are forbidden in the Torah. (Leviticus 11:29)
- Has anyone here ever eaten frog's legs? (They taste like chicken.)

WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT FROGS?

- Some frogs have poison glands on their skin, which may be dangerous to touch.
- What did the Egyptians dislike about them? (Their croaking made it impossible for people to talk, they contaminated food, and they got into everything—even Pharaoh's bed!)

IT'S TIME FOR THE FROG QUIZ.

- What kind of animal is a frog? (Amphibian—living partly in the water and partly on land.)
- How many different kinds of frogs and toads live in the world? (About 3800.)
- True or false?—25 different species of frogs in the United States *live in trees*.
- What's the one continent where frogs don't live? (Antarctica.)
- How big is the biggest frog? (About one foot long.)
- How far can a frog jump? (Up to 20 times its body length.)

ONE OF THE STRANGEST STORIES IS ABOUT A FROG WHO TAUGHT TORAH TO A RABBI. (Legends of the Jews)

- In the land of Israel there was once a very rich and pious man, who had a son named Rabbi Hanina.
- When the man was about to die, he sent for his son, Rabbi Hanina, and asked him, as a last request, to study the Torah, obey the commandments, and be kind to the poor.
- He also told him that his wife, Rabbi Hanina's mother, would also die on that day.
- He told him to go to market after they died, and buy the first thing offered to him, no matter the cost.
- All happened as foretold: the man and his wife died on the same day.
- The son in turn carried out his father's wish: he went to the market, and there he met an old man who offered a silver dish for sale, which he bought, although the price was very high.
- When he opened the dish, he found another dish, and inside of it, a live frog, jumping and hopping around gleefully.
- He gave the frog food and drink, and within a week the frog had grown so big that Rabbi Hanina made a cabinet for him, in which he ate and lived.
- In time, the cabinet became too small, and the Rabbi built a chamber, put the frog in it, and gave him much food and drink.
- But the frog consumed everything the Rabbi owned, until, finally, Rabbi Hanina was stripped of all his possessions.
- Then the frog began to speak: "My dear Rabbi Hanina," he said, "Do not worry! Because you raised me and cared for me, you may ask of me whatever your heart desires, and it shall be given to you."
- Rabbi Hanina answered, "I desire only that you should teach me the whole Torah."
- The frog agreed, and he did, indeed, teach him the whole Torah, and the 70 languages of humanity too.
- His method was to write a few words upon a scrap of paper, which he had his pupil swallow, and in that way he learned not only the Torah and the 70 languages, but also the language of beasts and birds.
- Then the frog spoke to Rabbi Hanina's wife: "You took good care of me, and I have not given you a reward. But your reward will be given to you before I leave, only you must both come with me to the woods. There you shall see what I shall do for you."
- So they went to the woods with him: The frog began to cry aloud, and all sorts of beasts and birds assembled.

- He commanded them to produce precious stones, as many as they could carry, and to bring herbs and roots for the wife of Rabbi Hanina, and he taught her how to use them as cures for all kinds of disease.
- When they were about to return, the frog said to them: “May God have mercy upon you, and reward you for all the trouble you took for me, without even asking who I am.
- Now I shall tell you: I am the son of Adam, and God has endowed me with the power to take any form or disguise I desire.”
- Rabbi Hanina and his wife departed for their home, and they became very rich, and enjoyed the respect and confidence of the king.
- Why do you think Rabbi Hanina and his wife became very rich and enjoyed the respect and confidence of the king?



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